

Recommendations
Task Force on Postsecondary Education
Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence
September 8, 2003

Since postsecondary reform was enacted in 1997 Kentucky has made great progress, documented by a study commissioned by the Prichard Committee in 2002. The challenge now is to maintain momentum around and focus on the ambitious common agenda established six years ago. These recommendations are designed to help accomplish that objective.

1. Method of screening, recruiting, and appointing trustees/regents

Nominees for University and Kentucky Community and Technical College trustees and regents are currently recommended by the Postsecondary Nominating Committee and appointed by the governor. The governor's staff also advertises board vacancies, reviews credentials and otherwise staffs the Nominating Committee.

We recommend that in the future the Council on Postsecondary provide all staff services for the Nominating Committee, including the solicitation of nominees for board widely across the Commonwealth. Following their appointment, new board member training shall be provided by the Institute for Effective Governance.

The 1997 reforms were intended to create an efficient, responsive and coordinated system of autonomous institutions. Trustees and regents are part of that system and should be accountable for its success as well as for the success of the institution they serve. A major role in board selection by the Commonwealth's coordinating board, the Council on Postsecondary Education, is an appropriate way to achieve the seamless, integrated system envisioned in House Bill 1.

2. Maintaining focus

The Strategic Committee on Postsecondary Education (SCOPE) and the Council on Postsecondary Education and Kentucky's universities and colleges must maintain the focus on the long-term goal of raising the standard of living of Kentuckians to a level at or above the national average by the year 2020 with an effective postsecondary educational system as the driving force. Kentucky can use and benefit from the natural tendency for competition among universities. But to do so, it is essential that institutions of higher learning work together toward a common goal.

?? We recommend that the Council on Postsecondary Education strengthen its direct relationships with board chairs through the creation of an

advisory group of board chairs or other means deemed effective by the Council on Postsecondary Education and the university/college presidents.

?? We recommend that the Council on Postsecondary Education implement funding incentives to facilitate increased inter-university cooperation and commitment to advancing the benefits of a coherent and focused system for the entire state.

3. *Broad-based ownership of reform goals*

We recommend the Council on Postsecondary Education take the lead, in cooperation with colleges and universities, in creating civic ownership of reform and engaging Kentuckians in the ongoing process of making reform successful.

Six years ago there was strong political leadership and strong support from business, civic, labor and education communities for postsecondary reform. Reform is not static nor is it ever completed. Kentucky needs a renewal of that leadership and support. The Council on Postsecondary Education should take the leadership in generating civic, business and labor interest in the long-term success of reform. External organizations such as the Prichard Committee and others are available to serve as allies in this endeavor. The Aims McGinnis report (October 15, 2002) noted that for such reforms to be successful they also require strong leadership from institutional presidents acting in concert and with agreement on common objectives.

It is also desirable to increase the engagement of independent colleges and universities in reform and make more effective use of their resources. This approach is also a means of broadening the coalition necessary to sustain reform for the next decade and beyond.

4. *Comprehensive universities*

We recommend that the role and mission of the comprehensive universities in postsecondary reform be clarified through careful evaluation of what is best for postsecondary education in Kentucky and also for the comprehensive universities.

Kentucky is fortunate to have its research universities, comprehensive universities and its community and technical colleges with strong and effective leadership at each institution. The role of the comprehensive universities was not as carefully developed in the 1997 reforms as was the role of other institutions and review at this time would be appropriate and valuable.

5. *Welfare reform client access to postsecondary education*

We recommend that the governor, legislature, and the Council on Postsecondary Education encourage the most flexible federal and state regulations to allow people moving from welfare to work to have access to full-time postsecondary education for a minimum of two years. This condition is primarily the responsibility of federal officials, so this recommendation will be communicated to Kentucky's federal legislative delegation.

A key goal of the 1997 postsecondary reform was to increase the number of Kentuckians participating in postsecondary education. Welfare reform limits participants to a maximum of five years of cash payments throughout their lifetime. To retain assistance they must be involved in specific approved activities primarily related to work. Current federal law allows clients one year of full-time education activities while receiving support services such as cash payments, childcare and Medicaid. Kentucky has been able to extend these education activities to two years because it has met its federal benchmark requirements to receive federal welfare dollars.

At the federal level, welfare reform legislation is now up for reauthorization. The proposal from the current administration eliminates the opportunity for all full-time education opportunities, allowing only limited part-time opportunities for participants in the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program. Families at this income level need to make a living wage, which requires education and/or training if they are to move permanently from welfare to the workplace.